

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. An inventory management system comprising:
at least one piece of equipment;
5 a plurality of components within said piece of equipment, each of said
components having an expected lifetime;
a computational element operatively coupled to said equipment;
an inventory of replacement parts for said components contained within
said computational element; and
10 a mechanism for tracking said inventory by recording a total of said
expected lifetime of said components within said inventory.
2. The inventory management system of claim 1, wherein said
computational element further comprises a user interface to said computational
15 element.
3. The inventory management system of claim 1, wherein said user
interface further comprises an input to said user interface, said input cataloging
replacement parts placed into and removed from said inventory.
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4. The inventory management system of claim 1, wherein said
components have at least one threshold related to said expected lifetime and said
mechanism monitors said threshold.
- 25 5. The inventory management system of claim 1, wherein said
mechanism further comprises:
at least one threshold for each of said components that is compared against
a predetermined parameter for each of said serviceable components; and
an inventory database that tracks replacement parts for each of said
30 components within said inventory.

6. The inventory management system of claim 5, wherein said computational element further comprises a user interface that allows one of the following actions relating to said serviceable components: setting of reorder levels; generation of recommendation reports; pulling of inventory; receiving of inventory; examination of inventory; ordering inventory; reordering of inventory; logging of activity; configuring of inventory; or modifying of inventory.

7. The inventory management system of claim 1, wherein said tracking mechanism further comprises an inventory notification system coupled to said inventory database.

8. The inventory management system of claim 1, wherein said mechanism for tracking further comprises a set of parameters used to determine quantities of reorder parts for said inventory.

9. The inventory management system of claim 1, wherein said mechanism for tracking further comprises a set of parameters used to determine a frequency at which reorder of parts for said inventory is made.

10. The inventory management system of claim 9, wherein said set of parameters is a rate of use of said replaceable components.

11. The inventory management system of claim 1, wherein said piece of equipment is a printing system and said mechanism records a remaining life for said replaceable components.

12. The inventory management system of claim 11, wherein said remaining life is a dynamic variable that can change in accordance with use of said printing system for any of said replaceable components.

13. The inventory management system of claim 11, wherein said remaining life for said replaceable components is computed each time one of said replaceable components is taken out of stock and replaced.

5 14. The inventory management system of claim 11, wherein said mechanism uses a daily printer page count to more accurately predict projected future usage of said replaceable components and inventory needs.

10 15. The inventory management system of claim 11, wherein said tracking system tracks a daily page count for each of a plurality of printers.

15 16. The inventory management system of claim 11, wherein said inventory management system automatically creates an order form when a threshold for a number of at least one of said replaceable parts within said inventory has been reached.

20 17. The inventory management system of claim 11, wherein said inventory management system automatically creates an order form for a specific number of replacement parts based on remaining inventory of said replaceable components.

25 18. The inventory management system of claim 11 wherein the inventory management system automatically creates an order form for a specific number of shipments per month based on a comparison of remaining inventory with an expected use parameter.

30 19. The inventory management system of claim 11 wherein the inventory management system employs a set of predefined parameters to automatically create an order form for said replaceable components.

20. The inventory management system of claim 19, wherein the inventory management system automatically creates said order form using a usage pattern for said piece of equipment.

5 21. The inventory management system of claim 20, wherein said usage pattern fluctuates.

22. A method for inventory management comprising the steps of:
providing at least one piece of serviceable equipment item that has a
10 plurality of replaceable components, and also providing an inventory of said replaceable components;
assigning a predetermined life span to each of said replaceable components within said serviceable piece of equipment;
creating a tracking system for said inventory; and
15 managing said inventory using said tracking system.

23. The method for inventory management of claim 22, wherein the step of creating further comprises said tracking system having a user interface that allows for at least one of the following: setting of reorder levels for said inventory;
20 generating of reports for said inventory; pulling of said replaceable parts for said inventory; receiving of said replaceable parts for said inventory; examining of said inventory; ordering of replaceable parts for said inventory; reordering of replaceable parts for said inventory; logging of activities regarding said inventory; configuring inventory or modifying inventory.

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24. The method of inventory management of claim 22, wherein the step of creating further comprises said tracking system having a set of parameters used to determine quantities of reorder parts for said inventory.

25. The method of inventory management of claim 22, wherein the step of creating further comprises said tracking system having a set of parameters used to determine a frequency at which parts for said inventory are reordered.

5 26. The method of inventory management of claim 22, wherein the step of creating further comprises said tracking system having a set of parameters that include a rate of use of said replaceable components and wherein the step of managing further comprises determining a replenishment period for said replaceable components.

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27. The method of inventory management of claim 26, wherein the step of managing further comprises determining a page life for said replaceable components from said rate of use, wherein said page life is a dynamic variable that can change over time for any of said replaceable components.

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28. The method of inventory management of claim 27, wherein the step of managing further comprises said page life for said replaceable components is computed each time one of said replaceable components is taken out of stock and replaced.

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29. The method of inventory management of claim 22, wherein the step of creating further comprises said tracking system employing a daily printer page count to more accurately predict projected future usage of said replaceable components and inventory needs.

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30. The method of inventory management of claim 22, wherein the step of creating further comprises said tracking system tracking a daily page count for each of a plurality of printers.

31. The method of inventory management of claim 22, wherein the step of managing further comprises generating an order form for said replaceable parts based on predicted use of said replaceable parts.

5 32. The method of inventory management of claim 22, wherein the step of managing further comprises generating an order form for a specific number of replacement parts based on remaining inventory of said replaceable components.

33. The method of inventory management of claim 22, wherein the step
10 of managing further comprises generating an order form for a specific number of shipments per month based on a comparison of remaining inventory of said replaceable components with an expected use parameter.

34. The method of inventory management of claim 22, wherein the
15 step of managing further comprises generating an order form based on a set of predefined parameters to automatically create an order form for said replaceable components.

35. The method of inventory management of claim 34, wherein the
20 step of managing further comprises generating an order form based on a usage pattern for said piece of equipment.

36. The method of inventory management of claim 22, wherein the
25 step of managing further comprises generating an order form employing said usage pattern as a dynamic variable.